

Coppertown U.S.A. by Robert L. Fox Jr.

A tour through Coppertown U.S.A. museum will take you back in history to when copper was king in the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan. Located in Calumet, Michigan, the museum building was originally part of the Calumet & Hecla complex. In fact, the museum building was once utilized by Calumet & Hecla as their pattern shop. The purpose of Coppertown U.S.A. is to tell the story of the mines, communities, and people who contributed to making the Keweenaw a world famous copper mining district.

The story of Michigan's copper industry began thousands of years ago when ancient miners attacked exposed veins of pure copper with large hammer stones. The tools and techniques used to mine the copper advanced over the centuries and is captured in a series of exhibits.

Mining displays include an exhibit showing the development of hand-held drill bits to one and two man drills. A mine lighting display shows the changes in mine lamps from candlesticks to Sunshine lamps to carbide lamps. Another display depicts a mine official's office complete with roll top desk and balance scale. A simulated mine provides a brief glimpse of the mine's world. Other displays relate to the mine blacksmith as well as to the importance that railroads played during the mining era.

Mounted on the walls of the museum are patterns made from wood which were used to manufacture products such as copper and brass fittings, bushings, grates, pipes, and tubing. Some of the products were used locally while others were shipped throughout the country.

A visit to historic Coppertown U.S.A will give you a glimpse into the past of a great American mining boom.

References:

Brochure, "Historic Coppertown U.S.A." May, 1983

Brochure, "Historic Museum: Coppertown U.S.A."

Mildon, Bob, "Guide to Michigan's Copper Country," Hancock Michigan, Keweenaw Publishing Co. 1984



Michigan Iron Industry Museum by Robert L. Fox Jr.

The Michigan Iron Industry Museum presents the history of Michigan's three iron ranges and the people who worked in the mines. The iron ranges include the Gogebic, Marquette, and Menominee. The museum opened to the public in May, 1987 and is located three miles east of the city of Negaunee amidst the forested ravines of the Marquette Iron Range. It overlooks the site of the Carp River Forge, the first iron forge in the Lake Superior region.

At this location, from 1848 to 1855, the Jackson Iron Company manufactured wrought iron from the local ore. This enterprise was to be the beginning of Michigan's iron industry that flourished for 125 years and continues today, supplying approximately one quarter of the iron ore that is mined in the United States.

The Michigan Iron Industry Museum not only tells the story of the iron industry, it also tells the story of American manufacturing and the people, towns, and companies of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

You will see an excellent selection of mining tools and equipment from hopper cars to pick axes, as well as informative pictures, mining artifacts, iron specimens, and numerous other interesting displays.

Reference: "Michigan Remembers the Iron Industry," brochure, no date.